

Whatever things were or were not proved against William of Wykeham, his enemies did not succeed in turning public opinion against him. Whatever he had done had been done nearly ten years back, and the Lancastrian party only now revived the past in order to divert attention from their own later misdeeds. Popular sympathy coupled together, as martyrs of the popular cause, Wykeham, wandering homeless through his bishopric like Lear through his kingdom, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, fast in the dungeons of Nottingham Castle.<sup>1</sup> The Bishops, during the next few months, rose to a height of popularity with the Londoners which they never attained again. Church questions were temporarily forgotten in political agitation against the tyranny and injustice of the Duke. The old King took his full share in the unpopularity of his ambitious son. Edward the Third had dismissed the Council elected by Parliament and destroyed the work of the Commons. His disreputable connection with Alice Perrers had become odious by the political use that lady made of her influence. The feelings of anger and dislike with which his subjects regarded their once glorious and popular monarch are recorded in a contemporai\*y work of great interest. William Langland, the Malvern poet, had in 1362 brought out the first edition of \* Piers Plowman.' The success of that extraordinary and fascinating work, and the wide diffusion of its ideas and imagery among the lower and middle classes, may be compared to the success of another work very similar in spirit, ' The Pilgrim's Progress ' of Bunyan. Langland spent the rest of his life in bringing out one edition after another, with many new cantos and fresh passages. Among other incidents added about 1377, we find a fable, Comparing the Commons to an assembly of mice and rats who re consulting how to bell the cat, the old King Edward, who i at perpetual war with them. But the poet warns the ommons that even worse times will come when the old cat ies, and the kitten, Richard the Second, is Ban& ; for there ill then be no one to keep order, and the horrors of anarchy ill be let loose on the land.<sup>2</sup>

. *Ang.*, 126. *P. Pl.*, B, Prol., 145-207, and Professor Skeat's note in ta« edition of 1886